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# THE MAX

TM

**HEY  
KID!**

**WHAT THE  
#\$%\*!  
ARE YOU  
LOOKIN'  
AT?**



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**BILL MESSNER-LOEBS**

**lettering**  
**MIKE HEISLER**

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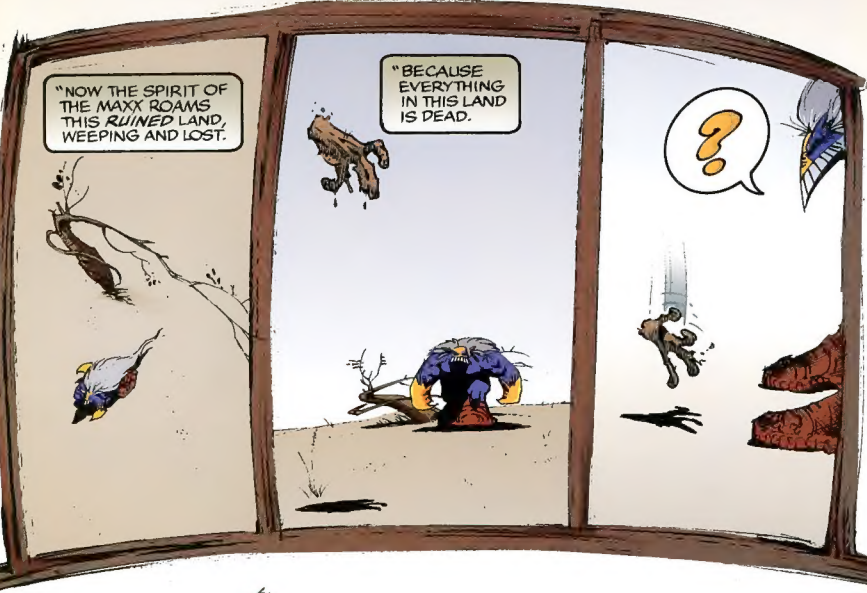




"I KNOW WHAT  
YOU DID."


"SOMEHOW YOU  
TRICKED JULIE  
WINTERS INTO  
GOING AWAY."

"AND WITHOUT HER, THE  
OUTBACK, WHICH IS A  
MANIFESTATION OF HER  
UNCONSCIOUS, *DIED*."



"NOW THE SPIRIT OF  
THE MAXX ROAMS  
THIS *RUINED* LAND,  
WEeping AND LOST."

"BECAUSE  
EVERYTHING  
IN THIS LAND  
IS DEAD."



"DEAD AND  
ROTTING."





"AND ON *THIS* PLANE,  
THE MAXX IS INCAPACI-  
TATED WITH LONELINESS  
AND GRIEF.



"HE'S CRAWLED  
INTO A HOLE TO  
MEDITATE ON  
HIS IMPOTENCE...

"AND  
SELF-  
PITY.

"CAUGHT UP  
IN FORCES  
HE CAN'T  
UNDERSTAND...

"HE BROODS  
ON ANGER...



"RAGE..."

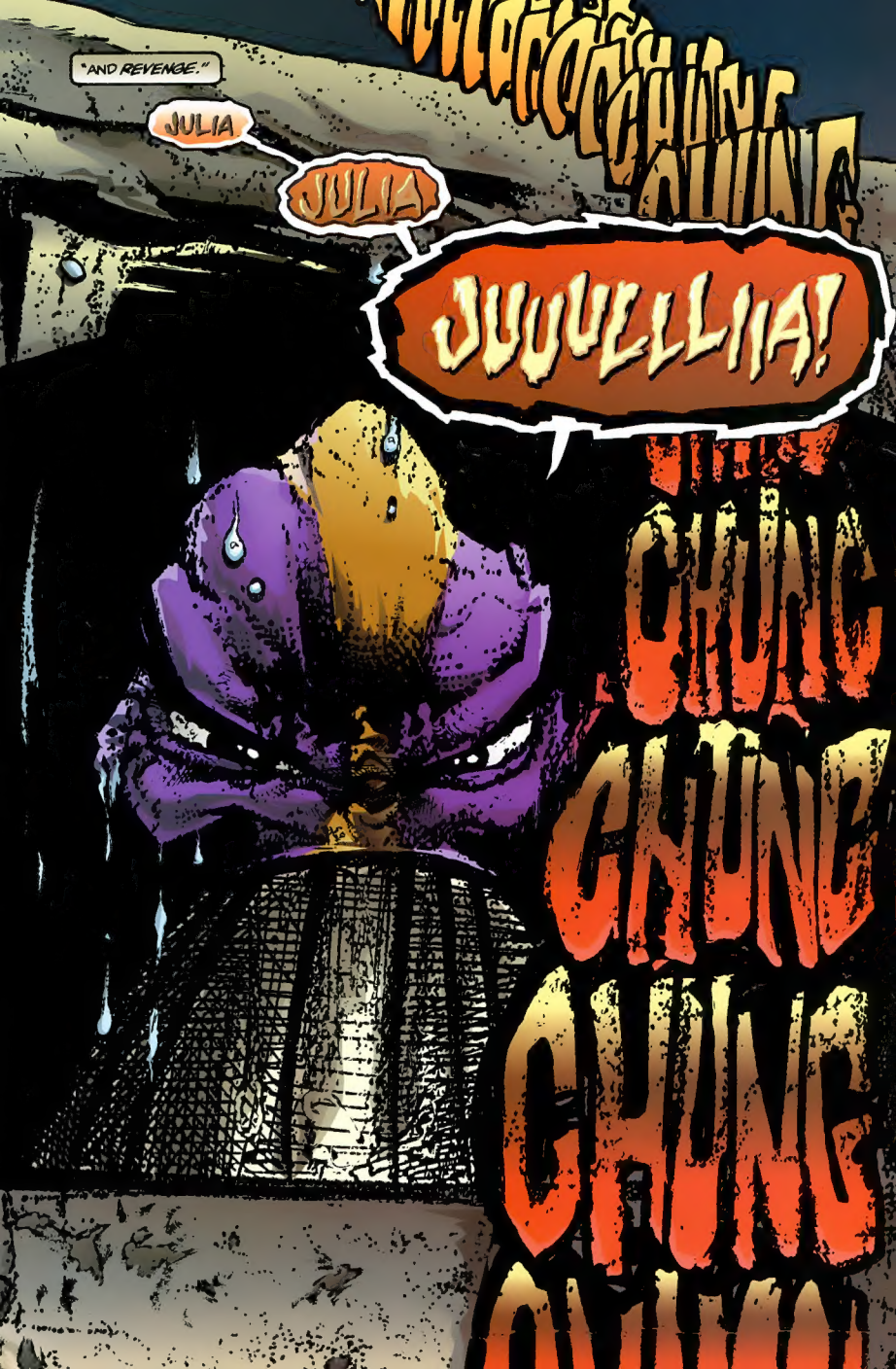


"AND REVENGE."

JULIA

JULIA

JUUUELLIA!






THAT'S A PRETTY COOL SUMMARY OF THE CURRENT SITUATION, KID. BUT HOW DO YOU KNOW ANY OF THAT? I THOUGHT ALL THAT EXTRA-DIMENSIONAL STUFF WAS SUPPOSED TO BE SECRET?

AWW, PRETTY MUCH THAT'S WHAT WE GOSSIP ABOUT IN SCHOOL ALL DAY, THE METAPHYSICAL AND SPIRITUAL ROOTS OF EVERYDAY LIFE, AS MANIFESTED THROUGH THE METAPHOR OF SUPER-HEROIC STRUGGLE.

I MEAN, IT'S NOT LIKE WE'RE REALLY GONNA USE GEOGRAPHY OR MATH.



THAT'S WHY I CAME TO FIND YOU TONIGHT. I THINK YOU'RE THE SORCERER MR. GONE.

MY NAME IS HARRY. AND I WANT TO BE POWERFUL AND STRONG.





LIKE YOU,  
EVERYBODY IN  
SCHOOL KNOWS  
HOW YOU BEAT  
MAXX.

HOW YOU  
PUSHED SOME KID'S  
HAND THROUGH A  
BRICK WALL AND  
INTO ANOTHER  
DIMENSION.

HOW YOU'RE  
DEPLETING THE  
RAIN FOREST!

HOW YOU  
UNDERMINED  
THE PRESIDENT'S  
HEALTH CARE  
POLICY...

HOW YOU  
MADE NEWT GINGRICH  
LOOK MEAN AND DAN  
QUAYLE SEEM LIKE A  
FOOL.

IT'S LIKE, AT  
EVERY JUNCTURE OF  
HISTORY, WHEN IT SEEMS  
LIKE PEOPLE ARE ABOUT  
TO CLEAN UP THEIR ACT,  
BECOME WISER, MORE  
HUMANE, MORE IN TOUCH  
WITH THEIR *TRUE*  
NATURES, YOU'RE THERE  
TO PUSH THEM BACK  
IN THE SLIME.

I MEAN,  
TOO COOL!  
NOBODY CAN  
HURT YOU!



SO, HOW DO  
YOU GET POWER?  
WELL...

I GUESS THE  
EASIEST WAY IS  
THROUGH KNOWLEDGE  
...MOSTLY SELF-  
KNOWLEDGE, KNOW  
YOUR WEAKNESSES  
AND THE WEAKNESSES  
OF OTHERS...

HUH? THAT  
SUCKS! I DON'T  
HAVE TIME FOR  
THAT CRAP!

BESIDES, I  
DON'T HAVE ANY  
WEAKNESSES.

REALLY? WELL,  
ME, MAXX, JULIE, AND  
EVERYONE ELSE ON THE  
GLOBE DOES HAVE THEM.  
EVERYONE EXCEPT FOR  
YOU, OF COURSE... AND  
THAT IS SOMETHING  
YOU CAN EXPLOIT.



I DON'T  
THINK YOU ARE  
MR. GONE! WHY DON'T  
YOU GIVE ME SOME-  
THING I CAN USE,  
SOMETHING THAT'LL  
MAKE ME POWERFUL  
AND FEARED  
RIGHT NOW?



LOOK, KID,  
THE MOST RELIABLE  
FORM OF POWER I KNOW  
IS HAVING POWERFUL  
FRIENDS-- JUDGES,  
SENATORS, LIKE THAT.  
ONCE YOU'RE A PART OF  
A SOCIO-POLITICAL ELITE,  
YOU CAN DO ANYTHING!  
THERE'S NO GREATER  
POWER THAN SETTING  
THE PRIME INTEREST  
RATE!

YEAH, BUT  
I'M IN JUNIOR  
HIGH! BUILDING  
A POWER BASE  
LIKE THAT WILL TAKE  
AT LEAST TILL I'M  
TWENTY. I WANT  
POWER NOW!

THEN WE'RE  
TALKING CRIME!  
I RECOMMEND  
WHITE COLLAR  
CRIME!

IT'S SAFE, IT'S  
HIGHLY PROFITABLE  
AND IF YOU STEAL BIG  
ENOUGH, LIKE LOOTING  
A SAVINGS AND LOAN, OR  
STARTING A CREDIT  
CARD COMPANY, FOLKS  
WON'T EVEN RECOGNIZE  
IT AS A CRIME!

BUT I  
DON'T KNOW  
HOW TO LOOT  
A SAVINGS  
AND LOAN!

THEN WE  
HAVE TO GO  
FOR STREET  
CRIME. BUY  
A GUN.

A GUN WILL GIVE YOU  
A LOT OF POWER OVER  
ANYBODY THAT DOESN'T  
HAVE A GUN. UNFORTUNATELY,  
YOU'RE NOT THE FIRST  
PERSON TO THINK OF  
THIS.

WITH HALF THE  
POPULATION PACKING,  
WE MAY HAVE TO ESCALATE.  
HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT  
BAZOOKAS?

WHY DON'T  
YOU JUST  
GIMME WHAT  
YOU'RE  
WEARING?

IT'S OBVIOUSLY  
A MAGNETIC AURA  
BOOSTER, FOR  
PROJECTING YOUR  
THOUGHT WAVES  
ONTO PEOPLE AND  
GETTING CONTROL  
OF THEIR EMOTIONS.

SMUFF  
SMUFF

WHAT'S  
THAT FUNNY  
SMELL?

THIS THING?  
IT'S A NECK  
BRACE. IT'S  
SUPPOSED TO  
KEEP MY HEAD  
IN LINE WITH  
MY SPINE.

IT DOESN'T  
LOOK LIKE IT'S  
WORKING.

S'NOT.  
IGNORE THE  
AROMA. CREATURES  
OF GREAT MAJESTY  
AND POWER  
SOMETIMES  
SMELL.

GLINK!



I DON'T  
THINK YOU CAN  
DO ANYTHING!

THERE'S NO  
NEED TO GET  
NASTY.

IT'S TRUE! MAXX  
IS SUPPOSED TO BE  
THIS BIG SUPERHERO,  
RIGHT? ONE DAY KENT  
AN' ME WERE TALKING  
TO THIS OLD BUM AND  
THIS JUNKIE JUMPED  
US.

DID MAXX SAVE  
US? NOOOOO. THE  
OLD BUM SAVED US.  
WHAT GOOD IS A  
HERO IF HE'S NOT  
GONNA BE AROUND  
EVERY TIME YOU  
NEED HELP?

YOU'RE  
JUST LIKE  
MAXX!

THAT'S WHEN  
I REALIZED IF I'M  
GONNA KEEP KENT  
SAFE, I'M GONNA  
HAVE TO BE POWER-  
FUL MYSELF... EVEN  
IF I HAVE TO BE  
A VILLAIN!



# JILL

I met this guy  
in a donut shop  
just outside of  
Butte, Montana.

He said he was  
Jack... something.  
A freelance  
forensic  
pathologist.

We laughed  
about that...  
Jack and Jill,  
you know.

THE  
DONUT HOLE  
"IT'S THE QUALITY"

THE  
DONUT HOLE  
"IT'S THE QUALITY"

ORDER  
HERE

HOT  
POT

I let him pick  
me up and take  
me to a  
cheesy motel.

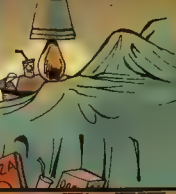
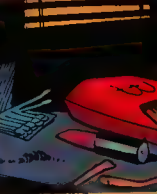
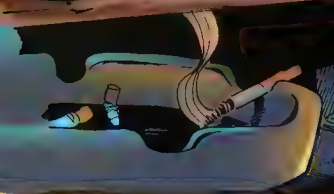
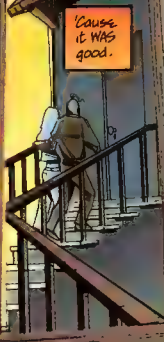
The  
sex.


'Cause  
it was  
good.

The sex,  
I mean.

The sleaziness  
made it better  
somehow.

It was the kind of sex where  
your body soaks heat and  
your scalp sweats and you  
cry out the name of a  
STUFFED ANIMAL.





Afterwards, when we woke up, Jack seemed different somehow... less playful.

Worried.

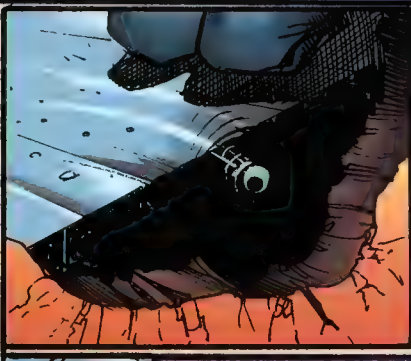
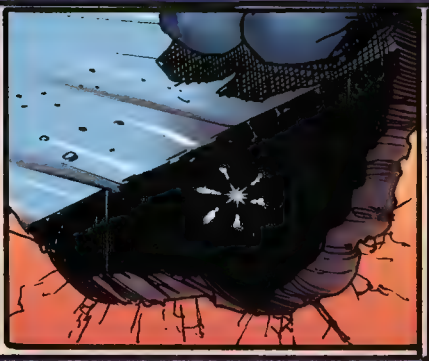
Tense.

Of course, it was then he realized I took his car.

Yeah. That was probably it.







WOW!



RIGHT UP TO THE  
POINT WHEN THE  
MARBLE HIT HIM  
ON THE HEAD, MAXX  
THOUGHT HE WAS  
TRYING TO BREAK  
OUT...

BUT THEN HE  
REMEMBERED...

OUT OF  
THE DYING  
OUTBACK...

AWAY  
FROM HIS  
PAINFUL  
MEMORIES  
OF JULIE,  
THE JUNGLE  
QUEEN.

HE WAS  
ACTUALLY  
TRYING TO  
BREAK IN...

IN THROUGH  
THE ROTTING  
CONCRETE...

THROUGH  
THE BURSTING  
WATER MAINS...

**BOWK!**

**INTO THE OL'...**





...BULL-DOG-TAR-RUBBER-FRUIT

THIS  
SIDE  
UP

HEADQUARTERS (WITH  
ATTACHED APARTMENT  
AND WALK-IN KITCHEN) TO  
**MR GONE,**  
DEMON PRINCE OF  
EVIL!

CRASH

HUM.  
TAPES...






SO, YOU SEE,  
SARAH... I HAD TO  
GIVE THAT PURPLE  
MUD-PUPPY A REAL  
VILLAIN TO FIGHT OR  
HIS LIFE WOULD HAVE  
BEEN MEANINGLESS.  
SO I CREATED  
THIS MR. BON~

ERR2T

CRASH







SO HERE'S  
HARRY, WALKING  
THROUGH THE  
RAIN, WISHING  
HE HAD POWER...

HARRY!

EVERYBODY  
AT SCHOOL SAYS  
YOU'RE MR.  
GONE'S IDIOT  
ASSISTANT.

STOOPID  
TAPES WEREN'T  
THERE. GONE'S  
GONNA KILL  
ME...

WHAT IF I  
AM? THAT'S MY  
BUSINESS!

DON'T  
HANG WITH  
GONE!

HE'S TRYING TO FENCE ME  
IN! TALKING TO MY FRIENDS...  
SENDING ME TAPES...!

I DON'T CARE  
WHAT YOU SAY, SARAH!  
HE'S MY FRIEND AND  
HE'S TEACHING ME  
HOW TO RULE THE  
WORLD! I DON'T  
CARE WHAT HE  
DOES TO ME  
AFTER THAT!

BUT IT'S  
NOT YOU HE  
WANTS.



SO AFTER  
I...UM...GAVE HER  
THE TAPES, SHE  
SAID YOU WERE  
JUST TRYING TO  
USE ME TO,  
Y'KNOW, GET  
TO HER.

THAT YOU  
WEREN'T GONNA  
GIVE ME ANY  
SECRETS TO POWER  
AT ALL!

HEH HEH.  
PRETTY FUNNY,  
HUH?

OH,  
SOMEBODY  
BROKE INTO  
YOUR PLACE,  
BY THE WAY.

VANDALS! A MAN TRIES  
TO DO WHAT'S RIGHT. BUYS  
A LITTLE LAND. SETS UP A  
SECRET HUMAN V.I.V. -  
SECTION AND TORTURE  
LABORATORY AND WHAT  
HAPPENS? SOMEBODY  
TRASHES IT!

RUSH IS  
RIGHT! THERE'S NO  
RESPECT FOR  
PRIVATE PROPERTY!

UH, SURE. BUT  
ABOUT WHAT SHE  
SAID, YOU REALLY  
ARE GONNA...

RATS. I'M  
TEMPORARILY  
PARALYZED AGAIN!  
I HATE IT WHEN  
THAT HAPPENS!

HARRY, BE  
A GOOD KID AND  
PULL ME OUT OF  
THE SUN BEFORE  
I REALLY STINK!

WUMP!

SURE,  
BUT...

YOU  
AREN'T JUST  
USING ME...

RIGHT?

OF COURSE I'M  
USING YOU! EVERYBODY  
USES EVERYBODY! WHAT  
PLANET DO YOU THINK  
YOU'RE ON?

I DON'T HAVE  
ANY FRIGGIN' POWER  
SECRETS! YOU FELL FOR  
THAT? I JUST KNEW WHERE  
A COUPLE OF THE  
DIMENSIONAL PORTALS  
ARE. I MAKE UP THE  
REST! ONLY AN IDIOT  
WOULD THINK I'VE GOT  
REAL SUPER-POWERS!

NOW GROW  
UP AND DRAG  
ME OUT OF THE  
DAMN SUN!!!

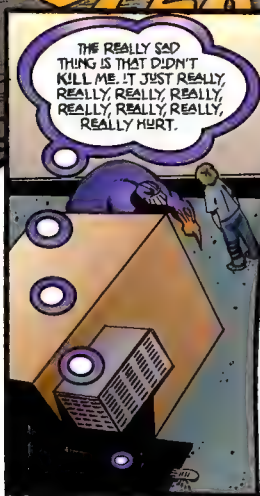


MY ONE FLOW AS AN  
ARCH-FRIEND WAS  
ALWAYS AN EXCESS  
OF CANDOR.



SUCH.

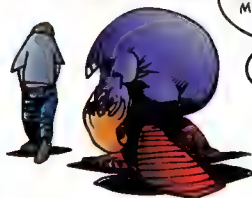
THE REALLY SAD  
THING IS THAT DIDN'T  
KILL ME. IT JUST REALLY,  
REALLY, REALLY, REALLY,  
REALLY, REALLY, REALLY,  
REALLY HURT.



HI, HARRY.  
SARAH SAID YOU  
MIGHT BE IN  
TROUBLE.

ANYTHING  
BAD HAPPENING  
UP HERE?

NO, MAXX.  
THERE'S NOTHING  
UP HERE AT ALL.







**Good news: Maxx will have his own half-hour on MTV, as opposed to sharing it with another show. But you'll have to wait 'til February for it to start. When it comes out, let me know what you think. Everyone says it looks a LOT like the book.**

Dear Sam,

My toast is getting cold, but I decided to write you this letter.

**JULIE CAN'T LEAVE!** Without Julie, MAXX is going to lose his grip on this reality and all hell is gonna break loose! Julie is his anchor in this world, and without her all is lost for our friend MAXX. Maybe it's just the opposite—maybe MAXX is Julie's foundation in the outback, and without him in her life, she's just meat for some wayward Dicant.

A loyal MAXX addict,  
Tim Tobias  
San Diego, CA

P.S. Are there plans for any MAXX figures a la Todd toys?

**No toys as of yet, but stay tuned. Maybe a CD-ROM game, and lots of other stuff planned, unless the cartoon tanks.**

Dear Mr. Kieth,  
Who is this "Indicia?" Throughout your responses in Issue #9, you told people to see Indicia. I can't figure out who or what it is.

Keep writing funky stories,  
Ezekiel Buchheit

SHANE LAMBERT  
Santa Cruz, CA

**The indicia is the little bitty words in the bottom of the inside front cover of the comic, lots of legal crap that I stick comments in. Oh yeah, we found Nathan Schultz, who says:**

Yo Sam! and that Bill guy,

Yes, this is Nathan Schultz and why do you want to know where I am?

Signing off,  
Da Shoe (Nathan Schultz)  
Fenton, MI

Dear Sam,

Whatever happened to the Jasper kid in #9? Is his hand still stuck in the outback?

Just wondering,  
Jeff Tutt  
Chesapeake, OH

**The first page of this issue shows what happened to his hand. The last page is six seconds before that.**

Dear Sam,

Does Jim (James?) Sinclair work at Dark Horse, doing work on *The Shadow* and various other things?

Paul Silveria  
Vancouver, WA

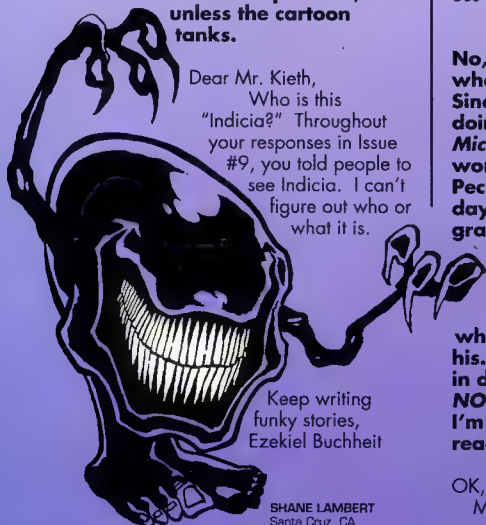
**No, that is a different Jim Sinclair, who actually goes by "James." Jim Sinclair has worked with Kelly Jones doing, among other things, *Micronauts* for Marvel. He also worked with me on "The Killing Peck" in *Secret Origins* for DC. His day job is working on computer graphics, and he is married to Liza.**

**Together they have Jamie, age 2, and a crazy cat named Pumpkin.**

**Jim is a cool guy, and a lot of what you think is my art is actually his. He pulls my butt out of the fire in deadline crunches, and I could NOT do the book without him (and I'm not just writing this because he's reading it).**

OK, Sammy, I think I got it:

Maxx is Julie's father, Mr. Gone is Sarah's



TIM TOBIAS  
San Diego, CA

father and Julie's uncle. So that means that Julie and Sarah are cousins. Then Sarah's wacked-out hippie mom may be Julie's mom's sister, so Maxx is Mr. Gone's brother-in-law. (What is this, *Great Expectations*?) So, if this is all true, then why doesn't anyone know that they're related to each other?

A Maxx-imum Fan,  
John Espinoza,  
Indio, CA

**Sam:** Ok, Bill, on this page Julie calls Mr. Gone her uncle.

**Bill:** That's interesting. So Gone is her uncle, eh?

**Sam:** No, no, of course not—just a friend of the family.

It's a nickname.

**Bill:** But if you call him, "Uncle," everyone will think he is.

**Sam:** No, no, no—nobody would be that stupid!

**Bill:** No, we'd be stupid if we didn't make it clear that he's not her uncle.

**Sam:** It doesn't matter. It's extra-neous information that doesn't advance our storyline.

**Bill:** What storyline?

Dear Sam,

I think I've figured out that Maxx is Julie's MOM.

Jacob Thompson  
Rapid City, SD

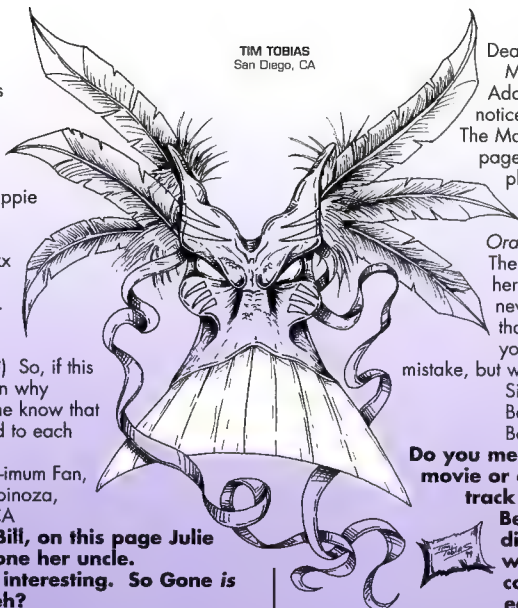
**Damn—So now what do we do for the big climax in #20?**

Dear Sam,

My drawing was printed in Issue #10, and for that I am very grateful. However there is one problem I must address. Under my name it says "Cranford, NJ." I don't live in Cranford, NJ. I live in Abbotsford, B.C., CANADA. An entirely different country!

Blair Hart  
Abbotsford, B.C.  
Canada

Oh... Sorry. . .



Dear Sam,  
My girlfriend, Addie, and I have noticed a mistake in The Maxx #10. On page two, the radio is playing a song from the *Clockwork*

*Orange* soundtrack. The line, "And keep her by the sea" never appears in that song. We think you have made a mistake, but we still love you.

Sincerely,  
Ben and Addie  
Barre, MA

**Do you mean in the movie or on the soundtrack album?**

Because they're different. When we recorded the cartoon, I wanted the movie version, which

is much shorter than the one on the record, but when we tried to obtain the music, the only version we could find was the one that's on the soundtrack album. This is not the original version I wanted, because it is too long and has the inferior verses. We couldn't lift what we wanted from the movie, because Malcolm MacDowell's dialogue starts partway through, but THAT'S the version we want! So if anyone can find this obscure original song by Erica Eagan ("I Wanna Marry a Lighthouse Keeper"), there's a swell prize in it for ya. (I realize this may start a whole lotta nonsense, but that's a good thing. . .)

Sam,

I read that yourself and Frank Frazetta will be releasing art work for Glenn Danzig's comic company. If so, when will this come out, and will it feature The Maxx?

Jonathan Allaire  
Frostburg, MD

**Glen and I were talking about doing a book which would be half me and half Simon Bisley doing Frazetta characters. But after sitting down and taking some stabs at the ol' Deathdealer, I have new awe for the**

ability it takes to *really* draw. I feel like, if I can't do a Frazetta book right, what's the point? (Besides, Bisley's art kicks my butt, and who wants to go through that in public!)

JAMES YONICK  
Mannheim, Germany



When I did Wolverine covers for Marvel Comics Presents, the rips in his clothing kept growing, 'til everyone started call-

ing them telephone cords. That's the whole story. Really.

"Oh, Great one"—[Sam],

I read in Maxx One-Half that you've done some Sandman work. It just so happens that Sandman is another of my favorites. What issues did you do?

Buddy Hanson

Lee's Summit, MO

**Issues 1-6—In fact, I co-created it with Neil. Well, actually Neil created it; I just came up with what he looked like (Sandman, not Neil). Neil and I patched up some old wounds recently and are talking about maybe collaborating on something in the future. How about it—is a Maxx-Sandman team-up too unlikely? Tell us what you think.**

Dear Sam,

What's this? No one has the rights to toast? Hmm...

Nick Main

Mauldin, SC

Dear Sam Kieth and company,

Besides the fact that the cords in question make the picture of Maxx look cool in the back of Issue #6, is there any hidden meaning there? I mean, are the cords some mysterious icons that will enlighten me if I solve their enigmatic puzzle? If it ruins the story for me, don't tell me.

LONG LIVE THE  
MAXX!!!!!!!

Andrew Hunt

Xenia, OH

Dear Mr. Sam,

By the time you get this, I may have seen you at the San Diego comic con [Nope. Sorry], but if you get it before, I'll be the chubby blonde gofer clutching my brother's copy of Maxx #1 in my sweaty hands while my bosses yell at me to get back to work. My brother turned me on to your book because he said I WAS Julie. I've stayed because I found much better-than-average storylines and cool characters who wear real CLOTHES. Just one thing, though: Why is Julie a Camille Paglia fan? Camille Paglia is SATAN! She thinks soap operas are a fundamental expression of womanhood. She thinks women who get raped were asking for it, fer chrissake!

Adios, hombre de parajitos!

Kilroy the Exceptionally Short

4885 Mt. Elbrus Dr.

San Diego, CA 92117

PS to Kelsey McNair, who drew the picture of Jimi Hendrix in Issue #9—Jimi

was LEFTHANDED, not RIGHTHANDED, as you drew him! PPS Should I start a Maxx zine? I'm not sure I'd do such a great job by myself, so I'm asking for submissions, art,

deranged ideas and/or opinions.

**Paglia who?**

**A long time**

**ago, I said**

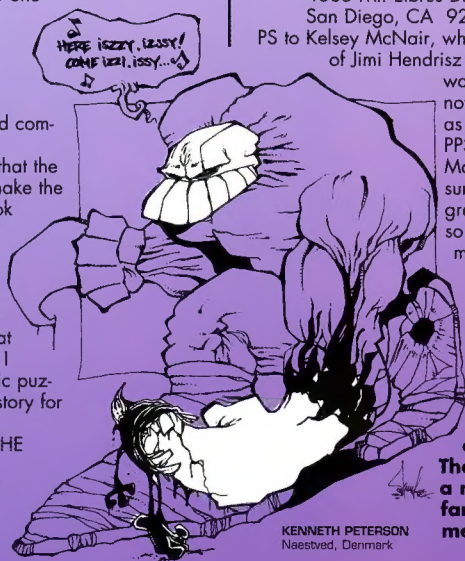
**that if any-**

**body wanted**

**to start a fan**

**club, go for it.**

**Those words were a mistake, since a fan club would mean we would**



KENNETH PETERSON  
Naestved, Denmark



have to be involved, but we don't have time or skills for that, what with the book, cartoon, etc. But a zine, something you folks could do yourselves, is a great idea. Write to Kilroy, for example, if you're interested in that kind of thing. Although we don't know her, I'm sure she's really cool. (Are you a she?)

Dear Sam,

Do you get discouraged that, even though you make these cool statements about feminism and successfully create an awesome, well-rounded female comic character (by well-rounded I mean interesting and original personality—a rarity in comic heroines—AND having non-stereotypical pudgy physical attributes), your fans keep sending in drawings of Julie as a centerfold bimbo with silicon implants? 'Cause I do. Somebody should tell these geeks to learn how to draw real women instead of looking through their girlie magazines for models!

A big, fat Maxx-head, feminist, and cartoonist so I know what I'm talking about,  
Johanna Faust  
Warminster, PA

**Actually, geeks like that grow up to be geeks like me who write stories where women are people too. It's not people who start there that I worry about—it's people who get stuck there.**

Dear Mr. Kieth,

**WHY SO LONG BETWEEN ISSUES?!** I

have this bizarre vision of an unbathe, unshaven Sam Kieth rising out of bed just long enough to make a few scribbles on his drawing board and then passing out again, exhausted from a day's work [**Pretty close!**]. Arrrrgh... the suspense between issues is killing me. I'm sure it takes a lot of hard work to put out an issue, but please, show us some mercy!!!!

Long Live MAXX,  
Mike Arena  
Maspeth, NY

**I'll let the next letter defend me.**

Dear Sam,

Why does everyone keep bitching about late issues and asking umpteen questions that answered themselves the issue after

they wrote? Why can't everyone sit back and enjoy the ride?

Take your time and tell your story and keep in mind that all the doubting Thomas's are full of wee-wee. Some of us like a good mystery.

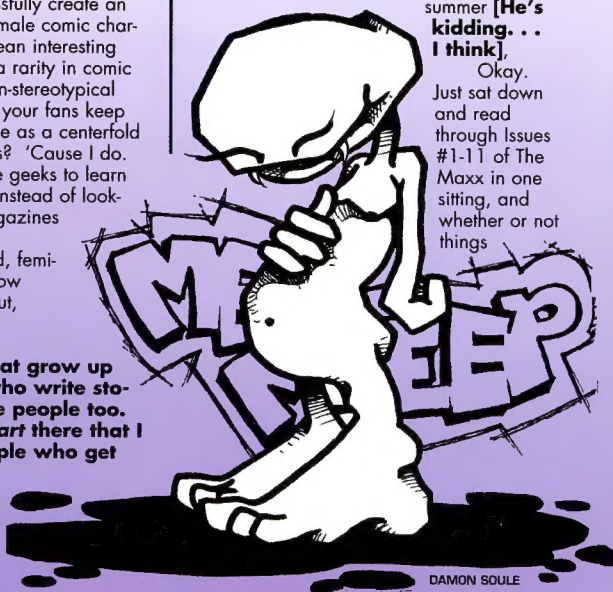
Scott Caudill  
Blacksburg, VA

To One Mr. Samuel Kieth, Guru of Maxx, Channel of Dreams, Thinker of Way Out Stuff, Artista Magnifica, and Bearer of So Many Titles They Escape Me. . . Thanks for letting me lay it on thicker than fudge in

summer [**He's kidding. . . I think!**].

Okay.

Just sat down and read through Issues #1-11 of The Maxx in one sitting, and whether or not things



are making sense to you, they are starting to make sense to me. I think. I'm about to engage you in a long exploration of what the hell it is The Maxx is about exactly, so stop me anytime if you get bored.

The Maxx himself is actually some guy named Dave who somehow found the seed-bringer (did I get that right?) mask that was the key to Julie Winter's spirit animal (seeds being the roots of Julie's intended new self reality?). Upon putting it on, he became consumed by her world, her Outback. As Mr. Gone said (Ish II): "You're not a rabbit. You just got in the way when Julie's spirit animal tried to incarnate on this plane." The Maxx misplaced his face—his identity. And something in him is very scared to face

exactly what it is he was, maybe because what he is now might just be better. Besides, he's afraid the world will end when Julie leaves (which I assume will be disproved in Issue 12). Why would he want to escape? All this comes mainly from Issue 5, and the story of the Crappon Inna Hat. You were right. That was real important. The more I read it, the more I become convinced it is a modern-day comic masterpiece.

Julie is tougher. We know more about her, but the pieces themselves are more complex. I think that her relationship with the rabbit as her spirit animal was not only cemented by its death, but also directly imperiled by it. She lost her guide. The rabbit was trying to clue her in to the fact that "something is wrong here," that the way her mother handles herself maybe isn't the best way of dealing with things.

The day the rabbit died, Julie inherited that switch, that ability to shut things off and do "what needed to be done." The ability to survive. Unfortunately, surviving doesn't allow you to do much else. Years later Julie becomes an architect, trying to provide structure for her life. She lives in a building her father designed, and I'm not quite sure what the connection is there. When she was attacked and raped, she overcame it by flicking the switch yet again, and this may have been the catalyst that fractured the Outback and set up the book. Of course, that's a big "may."

As for her social work, Julie herself has seen into the truth there: that, in an attempt to gain control, she surrounds herself with people she has control over. She's also come to some kind of understanding with what Mr. gone tried to reveal to her in Issue 2, before she beheaded him. She hit the switch again. I think she's making the wrong decision leaving Maxx behind; he is supposed to help her find her own truth,

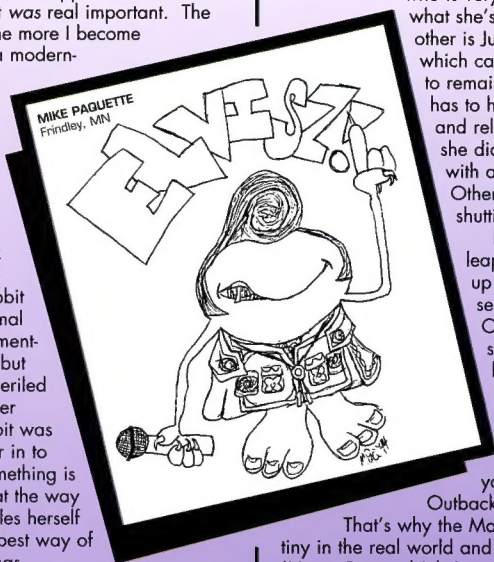
after all. Maybe this is the truth he's led her to, though, that she has to find out on her own. I'm not sure.

As for her fractured psyche, it seems to have two main parts. One is the corrupted Leopard Queen, Julie's **[possible]** future, who is very much afraid of what she's becoming. The other is Julie's younger self, which can no longer afford to remain the same. Julie has to help it grow up, and relearn everything she did in life, except with a different ending. Otherwise she'll keep shutting everything off.

Now comes a big leap. When Julie met up with her other selves in her Outback, she screwed with a loosely established balance. As the balance shifts and she re-educates her younger self, the Outback grows smaller.

That's why the Maxx and Pitt were tiny in the real world and the three of them (Maxx, Pitt, and Julie) were huge in the world of the Outback. Why exactly a switch occurred, with their Outback personalities being cut loose in the real world and vice versa, I'm not sure. Maybe something to do with the balance again. I have no idea how Pitt got dragged into it, except that Mr. Gone duped him into searching for Tommy in the real world, a Tommy which was really an is.

Now for big jump number two. Hang on. I think everyone we have seen so far, just about, is a piece of Julie's psyche, which has become fractured beyond belief, which is understandable after all the damage she has suffered without a spirit animal to guide her through her dark hours. Maxx embodies the idealistic, heroic elements of her persona. We heard a little of it when Gone captured her in Ish 2. After all her Paglia-speak, she cut loose on Gone, saying that he was the sicko with the problem with women who had kidnapped her, and she had nothing to do with it. Not quite Paglia to my ears. Anyway, the Leopard Queen is the strong sexual element of her psyche,

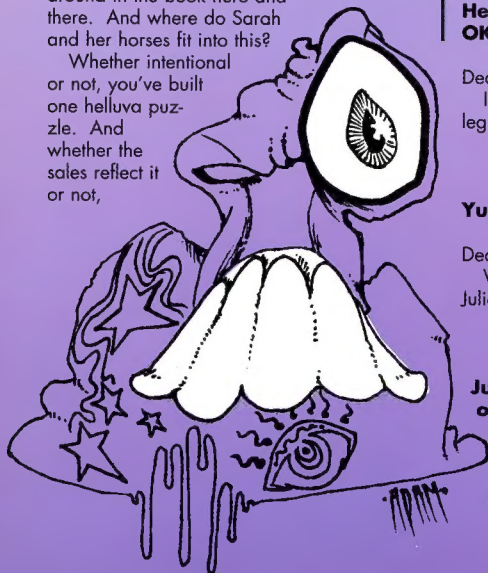


which can't help but become darker and darker **[if she continues on her current path]**. Kid Julie is obviously her childlike persona. Mr. Gone is the most dangerous element. He is her truth. He holds her answers, and she'll have to face him down to really begin to rebuild her life. And as her truth, he reflects the dark parts of her soul, which lends him his power and his mission.

We know how The Maxx got pulled into Julie's fractured fantasy, but Mr. Gone remains very much a mystery. How Sarah, Glorie, and those elements of the cast fit in is also unclear. Obviously Julie had contact with Mr. Gone in her youth, but I'm not sure if he was Mr. Gone, second-rate, gun-toting, pan-dimensional sorcerer at that point. But listening to his conversation with her father, there was obviously something going on. Is he really her uncle? I'm not quite sure. He's obviously Sarah's father, but how that fits into his existence in relation to Julie's family is currently eluding my grasp. How exactly does the doll tie in? Again, I'm weak on that point. I can't figure everything out, dammit.

Hell, what about Julie's dad; what's his deal? I hope just because she's split we won't stop seeing her in the book. While I'm sorting around for loose cannons, what the hell is the deal with the Buick? Tommy had one and I've picked one up tooling around in the book here and there. And where do Sarah and her horses fit into this?

Whether intentional or not, you've built one helluva puzzle. And whether the sales reflect it or not,



MILES PENCKE  
Saranac, NY

you've currently created one of the best "superhero" books ever done.

Nicholas Jahr  
Great Barrington, MA

**This guy's so close he's on fire, with only a couple of minor comments I added. Nothing made sense to me before, but now it's all coming together. Thanks for a deep read of this stuff!**

**Any story can be interpreted a bunch of different ways, so don't get totally hung up on one. Even Bill and I disagree about what some stuff means. All that matters is that it means something to someone. Hell, maybe that doesn't matter—OK, never mind. Nothing matters. . .**

Dear Sam,  
Is "Qusak" the actual sound of a bunny leg getting run over by a Buick?  
Your Properly Brainwashed Fan  
Johnny T. Rutledge  
Dallas, TX

**Yup.**

Dear Mr. Kieth,  
Who or what eats the "Kat Food" in Julie's refrigerator?  
Peace, Love, Comics,  
"Crash"  
Aurora, CO

**Julie. She had a cat, but she ran over it [Qusak!] and can't bear to throw out its food.**

ADAM DAVIS  
Gilroy, CA